

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 07876 240509Z

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6987

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EFIS, AS

SUBJ: LOBSTER AND SCALLOP FISHERY

REF: STATE 263021

1. STATISTICS ON FY1975 CATCHES OF SPINY LOBSTER AND SCALLOPS NOT YET AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, OFFICIAL OF FISHERIES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, GIVES AN ESTIMATE OF LOBSTER CATCH OF 12 THOUSAND METRIC TONS IN 1975. ESTIMATE ON SCALLOP CATCH WILL BE AVAILABLE IN APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS. DATA FOR FY74 CATCHES AS FOLLOWS: LOBSTER - 11.7. THOUSAND METRIC TONS; SCALLOPS - 12.4 THOUSAND METRIC TONS (SHELL WEIGHT).NO ANTICIPATED CATCH DATA FOR 1976 IS AVAILABLE.

2. RE PARA 2 REFTTEL, AUSTRALIAN SALES OF SCALLOPS TO ALL MAJOR OVERSEAS MARKETS HAVE FALLEN. THIS IS CAUSING GREAT CONCERN TO LOCAL INDUSTRY WHICH GIVES THREE REASONS FOR DECLINE IN EXPORTS: (A) GENERALLY DEPRESSED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN IMPORTING NATIONS; (B) LARGE WORLD SCALLOP CATCH; (C) INCREASED COMPETITION FROM NEW ZEALAND. LACK OF SALES TO U.S. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN AS U.S. WAS AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR CUSTOMER IN FY74, TAKING SCALLOPS VALUED AT \$A1.7 MILLION. IN PAST 12 MONTHS U.S. HAS BOUGHT ALMOST NO AUSTRALIAN SCALLOPS. FRANCE, AUSTRALIA'S SECOND MAJOR CUSTOMER, IS NOW BUYING FROM NEW ZEALAND, WHERE DEVALUATION OF NZ\$ HAS MADE COST OF SCALLOPS CHEAPER

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PAGE 02 CANBER 07876 240509Z

AND EVEN LOCAL AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS HAVE SHOWN PREFERENCE

FOR IMPORTED NEW ZEALAND SCALLOPS WHICH ARE OFTEN LARGER
AND OF BETTER QUALITY. FISHERIES DIVISION ASSUMES U.S.
ALSO NOW BUYING FROM NEW ZEALAND OR OTHER MARKETS.
PERCIVAL

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